



Weekly Special Report



Produced by the Public Affairs Section

INSIDE

New Program to Prevent Spread of HIV Among Mobile Populations

Save the Children USA, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the Federal HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Office (HAPCO), and the Federal Ministry of Health, in concert with local and international partners on Thursday, October 22 launched the TransACTION program, which aims to provide HIV and Sexually Trans-



Thomas H. Staal, USAID Mission Director speaking at the event.

mitted Infections prevention and care services for at risk mobile populations.

The program officially started in May 2009 and will target the most at-risk populations in 120

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United States Unveils Sudan Strategy

Addis Ababa, October 20, 2009 – The United States Government unveiled in Washington Monday a comprehensive strategy to confront the serious and urgent situation in Sudan. In announcing the new strategy, President Obama said, "First, we must seek a definitive end to conflict, gross human rights abuses and genocide in Darfur. Second, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the

North and South in Sudan must be implemented to create the possibility of long-term peace. These two goals must both be pursued simultaneously with urgency. Achieving them requires the commitment of the United States, as well as the active participation of international partners."

Sudan is at an important crossroads that can either lead to steady improve-

ments in the lives of the Sudanese people or degenerate into even more violent conflict and state failure. The United States has a clear obligation to the Sudanese people -- both in our role as witness to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, and as the first country that unequivocally identified events in

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towns, including commercial sex workers, at risk youth, truck drivers and communities along the identified transportation routes over a period of five years. PEPFAR, through USAID, has allocated \$40 million dollars for the program. The program aims to prevent new infections, strengthen linkages to care and support services, promote behavior change and communication, increase economic empowerment to avert new infections, build capacity, and promote gender equity and equality.

Speaking at the Hotel Intercontinental during the launch of the program, USAID Mission Director Thomas Staal lauded TransACTION for including private commercial service providers within the health care network. "This is a bold step towards public/private partnerships which will improve and expedite not only overall service delivery but will also strengthen referral linkages to counseling and testing services," said Mr. Staal. In his address, Mr. Staal emphasized that grassroots community organizations and local partners will continue to manage the program with HIV/AIDS committees taking the lead.

TransACTION was initiated as a follow on to the High Risk Corridor Initiative (HRCI), which began in 2001 and targeted at-risk populations in 21 towns along the transportation corridor from Addis Ababa to Djibouti. According to the TransACTION Chief of Party, Yoseph Burka, "The new program will build



Invited guests at the launching of TransACTION program.

on the lessons learned from the HRCI by adopting a balanced approach that combines skill and attitude development with behavior change, risk reduction and underlying complex social norms amongst at-risk individuals."

Two critical reports, "Faces of Hope" and "The Essence of Life", which highlight testimonies and success stories from the HRCI were also released at the event. Marc Nosbach, the Acting Country Director for Save the Children, reiterated the critical role played by HRCI in giving individuals hope and a life line. Referring to a beneficiary named Mulu from Dukem, Mr. Nosbach said, "by providing just a quintal of teff and cooking tools to Mulu, an HIV-positive and widowed mother of two, we gave her an alternative healthy lifestyle, a sustainable way to feed herself and her

two children and above all, hope in the future." Mulu was a beneficiary of one of the many income generating activities introduced to provide economic empowerment to at risk groups and communities.

Emphasizing the significance of TransACTION to Ethiopia, the Director General of HAPCO, Dr. Betru Tekle, said TransACTION is timely and consistent with the national roadmap in terms of addressing the needs of at risk mobile and migrant populations who are vulnerable to HIV due to the nature of their jobs.

The launch was attended by USAID/PEPFAR team members, Government of Ethiopia representatives, members of local and international Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), as well as program beneficiaries. ♦

United States Unveils Sudan Strategy . . .

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Darfur as genocide – to help lead an international effort.

In the time remaining before the referenda and consultations, the United States is working to reinvigorate international engagement in the CPA and to bolster the peace accord by supporting national elections in 2010, working to resolve outstanding border demarcation disputes, and ensuring the parties live up to their obligations to prevent a return to war. President

Obama said, “If the Government of Sudan acts to improve the situation on the ground and to advance peace, there will be incentives; if it does not, then there will be increased pressure imposed by the United States and the international community.”

The new strategy focuses on reinvigorating the international support that is critical to building peace and security in Sudan. The strategy is based on a policy of “verify, then trust” such that backsliding on CPA implementation or failure by any party to work to resolve the situation in Darfur is met with credible pressure, leveraged by the United States or the international community. The Strategy outlines how the United States will work closely with its international partners to: provide assistance for elections in 2010 and the referendum on southern self-determination in 2011; support efforts to push for the timely and transparent demarcation of the



The first group of displaced ethnic Dinka, mostly women and children, arriving at Lologo near Juba, in 2005. President Barack Obama has unveiled a new policy on Sudan and warned Khartoum of more US pressure if it failed to respond to his fresh incentives to stop "genocide" and "abuses" in Darfur. (AFP/UNICEF/File/Georgina Cranston)

North-South border, support conflict resolution mechanisms within southern Sudan and along the north-south border; and Promote Improved Governing Capacity and Greater Transparency in Southern Sudan.

U.S. Strategic Objectives

The U.S. strategy in Sudan must focus on ending the suffering in Darfur, and building a lasting peace. The three principal U.S. strategic priorities in Sudan include:

- 1) A definitive end to conflict, gross human rights abuses, and genocide in Darfur.
- 2) Implementation of the North-South CPA that results in a peaceful post-2011 Sudan, or an orderly path toward two separate and viable states at peace with each other.
- 3) Ensure that Sudan does not provide a safe haven for international terrorists.

The United States will use all elements of influence to achieve our strategic objectives. Fundamental to all United States Government efforts to bring about peace and security throughout Sudan is holding responsible parties accountable for creating the conditions that can foster concrete and sustainable improvements in the lives of Sudanese people. This includes frank dialogue with the Government of Sudan about what needs to be accom-

plished, how the bilateral relationship can improve if conditions transform, and how the government will become even more isolated if conditions remain the same or worsen. United States policy will also acknowledge that the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) must also abide by its responsibilities under the terms of the CPA, and prioritize conflict mitigation and resolution, capacity-building, transparency and accountability, and service delivery.

Each quarter, the interagency at senior levels will assess a variety of indicators of progress or of deepening crisis, and that assessment will include calibrated steps to bolster support for positive change and to discourage backsliding. Progress toward achievement of the strategic objectives will trigger steps designed to strengthen the hands of those implementing the changes. Failure to improve conditions will trigger increased pressure on recalcitrant actors. ♦

Sudan Policy Aims at Ending Genocide, Implementing Peace Accord

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton unveiled a “comprehensive” U.S. policy for resolving the conflicts in Sudan, focused on ending human rights abuses and genocide in the Darfur region, fully implementing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the government and the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM) and ensuring Sudan does not become a haven for violent extremists.

Speaking to reporters at the State Department October 19, Clinton said today’s Sudan, four years after the signing of the CPA, is “at a critical juncture, one that can lead to steady improvements in the lives of the Sudanese people or degenerate into more conflict and violence.”

The people of Darfur still live in “unconscionable and unacceptable conditions,” Clinton said. The U.S. focus, she said, is on “reversing the ongoing dire human consequences of genocide by addressing the daily suffering in the refugee camps, protecting civilians from continuing violence, helping displaced persons return to their homes, ensuring that the militias are disarmed and improving conditions on the ground.”

The situation in Sudan has emerged as one of the largest and most devastating humanitarian crises for the 21st century, the State Department said in an October 19 statement. More than 20 years of fighting between the government and the SPLM has killed more than 2 million people, and key portions of the 2005 CPA remain unfulfilled and will be a flashpoint for future armed

conflict unless implemented, Clinton said.

In addition, Sudan’s ruling National Congress Party and government-supported militia launched a genocidal campaign in 2003 against ethnic groups affiliated with a potential

down, Clinton said.

“We are realistic about the hurdles to progress,” but “the problems in Sudan cannot be ignored or willed away,” Clinton said, adding that although dialogue will continue with the parties in the conflict, “words



Despite the presence of U.N. and African Union forces in Darfur, violence against civilians continues, Secretary Clinton says.

rebellion, killing hundreds of thousands, displacing 2.7 million people and creating more than 250,000 refugees, according to the State Department statement. Sudan’s president, Omar al-Bashir, has been indicted by the International Criminal Court for his alleged role in the Darfur genocide.

Instability in Sudan not only jeopardizes the future of the country’s 40 million inhabitants, but can also “be an incubator of violence ... in an already volatile region,” Clinton said.

The fate of Sudan’s people is “profoundly important” to U.S. officials, from President Obama on

alone are not enough” to end the conflict and humanitarian suffering, and the United States is prepared to take measures to encourage progress.

“Assessment of progress and decisions regarding incentives and disincentives will be based on verifiable changes in conditions on the ground. Backsliding by any party will be met with credible pressure in the form of disincentives leveraged by our government and our international partners,” Clinton said.

The secretary said the United States has “a menu of incentives and disincentives” that includes

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both political and economic measures, but added “we want to be somewhat careful in putting those out” when she was asked to specify potential actions.

In an October 19 statement on the comprehensive strategy, Obama warned that Sudan is “poised to fall further into chaos if swift action is not taken,” and the conscience of both the United States and the international community requires action “with a sense of urgency and purpose.”

The president said he plans to renew U.S. sanctions on the Sudanese government. “If the Government of Sudan acts to improve the situation on the ground and to advance peace, there will be incentives; if it does not, then there will be increased pressure imposed by the United States and the international community,” he said.

At the State Department, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice said there will be “no rewards for the status quo, no incentives without concrete and tangible progress,” and “significant consequences for parties that backslide or simply stand still.”

To track progress on the ground, the United States has more sources of information than in the past, including the hybrid United Nations-African Union peacekeeping force in Darfur (UNAMID), the 10,000 U.N. peacekeepers in the south, and the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights. “We’re in contact with all the parties, and I’d have every confidence that our challenge will not be lack of information,” Rice said.

ELECTION, REFERENDUM SCHEDULE ADD TO URGENCY

Retired U.S. Air Force General Scott Gration, who is the Obama administration’s special envoy for Sudan, said there is a strong sense of urgency to improve the situation in the country because Sudan is scheduled to hold national elections in April 2010. And a referendum in southern Sudan on self-determination, which could lead to that region’s independence, is likely to be held before the end of 2011.

“Success requires frank dialogue with all parties in Sudan, with the regional states and international community. We all must work together to get tangible results on the ground, to achieve a lasting peace, a better life for future generations of Sudanese. And we must not stop until our task is complete,” Gration said.

According to the October 19 statement from the State Department, the Obama administration has learned “critical lessons” from previous U.S. efforts to resolve the conflicts in Sudan, including the need to engage both with allies and “with those with whom we disagree,” holding individuals responsible for genocide and humanitarian atrocities, and valuing Sudanese counterterrorism support, but not as “a bargaining chip to evade responsibilities in Darfur or in implementing the CPA.”

The October 19 statement said that rather than viewing process-related accomplishments such as the signing of a memorandum of understanding between two parties as a means of determining progress, U.S. officials instead will base their assessments on “verifiable changes in conditions on the ground.”

“Each quarter, the interagency at senior levels will assess a variety of indicators of progress or of deepening crisis, and that assessment will include calibrated steps to bolster support for positive change and to discourage backsliding. Progress toward achievement of the strategic objectives will trigger steps designed to strengthen the hands of those implementing the changes. Failure to improve conditions will trigger increased pressure on recalcitrant actors,” the statement said.

Along with providing assistance for voter registration and education, balloting, election monitoring and other services, the Obama administration will encourage parties in the north and south to enact legal reforms conducive to a more credible electoral process, work for the “timely and transparent demarcation of the north-south border,” and support efforts to develop a post-2011 wealth-sharing agreement between the two.

The full text of President Obama’s statement (<http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2009/October/20091019095937eaifas1.632327e-02.html>) and a transcript of the briefing by Clinton, Rice and Gration (<http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2009/October/20091019140256eaifas0.7803614.html>) are available on America.gov.

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦

Innovative U.S.-African Partnership Aims at Better Nutrition

By Jim Fisher-Thompson
Staff Writer

Washington — An innovative new public-private sector partnership with small-scale businesses in Africa will harness the power of commerce and U.S. expertise in health care and development to improve food security on a continent where disease strikes hardest at the undernourished.

The partnership of General Mills, a leading U.S. food company, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) was announced September 25 at the closing of the Fifth Annual Meeting of the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI).



Macreen Banda collects food from a USAID nutrition program in Malawi aimed at populations vulnerable to HIV/AIDS.

The initiative will link the technical and business expertise of General Mills and up to nine additional food companies with up to 200 small and medium-sized mills and food processors in 15 sub-Saharan African countries.

The joint project, which could potentially reach a value of \$21 million, will also benefit an estimated 1.6 million smallholder farmers who supply the African businesses.

Established in 2005 by former President Bill Clinton, the CGI brings together a community of global leaders to devise and implement innovative solutions to some of the world's most pressing challenges. In four years, CGI members have made more than 1,400 commitments, valued at \$46 billion, in more than 170 countries.

"People don't have to have the same politics, the same religion, or speak the same language to work together and to have an impact," Clinton said. "We all have things to learn from each other. What we need is a shared mechanism to achieve common goals."

President Obama seeks to achieve those goals with the pledge he recently made of \$3.5 billion in U.S. aid for food security worldwide. The commitment involves continuing to provide emergency food aid while helping train farmers, especially women, in modern techniques and supplying the necessary agricultural inputs.

Peter Erickson, General Mills senior vice president of innovation, technology and quality, said the partnership "provides us with a practical

way to further our mission of nourishing lives in Africa. We have already witnessed the great things that can happen when we connect our employees with small, but talented and growing, food processors in Africa and we are excited to see this initiative grow."

Acting USAID Administrator Alonzo Fulgham was also excited by the project, saying the partnership ties in with his agency's mission "to stimulate economic development, improve the capacity of agricultural processors, and support the health and wellness of farmers and small and medium-size business owners across sub-Saharan Africa."

Fulgham added, "We have high hopes that this collaboration will encourage sustainable economic and social growth in some of the world's neediest countries."

For many African victims of HIV/AIDS, undernourishment can hinder treatment. PEPFAR programs provide supplemental foods to enhance the effectiveness of treatment for many AIDS patients and will use the General Mills partnership to purchase local foods at low cost that not only will help AIDS patients but also will stimulate and promote food security in areas heavily affected by HIV/AIDS. PEPFAR now provides life-saving anti-retroviral treatment for more than 2 million people in Africa.

The General Mills public-private partnership is part of the ongoing effort by Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and the State Department to engage the private sector in international development and diplomacy.

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U.S. Renews Call on Guinean Junta to Step Aside

By David Gollust
VOA News

The United States is renewing its call on Guinea's ruling junta to yield power to an elected government, and it is indirectly scolding China for reportedly reaching a multi-billion-dollar mining deal with the authorities in Conakry.

The Guinean junta led by Captain Moussa Dadis Camara has come under intense international criticism after troops, including elite presidential guards, opened fire on demonstrators in the capital's main stadium September 28.

Local human rights groups say more than 150 people were killed and they say a similar number of women protesters were raped by soldiers.

The demonstrators had turned out to protest the apparent intention of junta leader Camara to run in elections planned for January despite earlier promises to step down.

In the wake of the violence, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Johnnie Carson was dispatched to Conakry to tell Camara to restore order, allow an independent investigation of the violence, and honor his pledge to step down.

At a news briefing October 14, Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs P.J. Crowley reiterated the

U.S. call for a return to elected, civilian rule.

"We are significantly concerned about events in Guinea," he said. "We have made clear, both in discussions there in Conakry and discussions here in Washington, that the current junta led by Captain

Dadis Camara should step aside, should open the door for legitimate elections so that a legitimate government duly elected by the people of Guinea can emerge. We also think there should be an international investigation of the events recently that resulted in the deaths of over 150 people," he added.

In the Senegalese capital Dakar on October 14, diplomats of the International Contact Group on Guinea demanded that junta leaders formalize arrangements by October 16 that would rule out their participation in the presidential elections.

Meanwhile in Addis Ababa, the European Union's commissioner for development and humanitarian aid Karel de Gucht said the September 28 killings were a crime against humanity for which junta leader Camara should eventually face trial.



Guinea's military leader Captain Moussa Dadis Camara speaks to the media, 02 Oct 2009

The junta leader, for his part, has denied involvement in the killings, which he attributed to rogue elements of the security forces. He has named a 31-member commission including three members of the junta to investigate the incident.

State Department spokesman Crowley had indirect criticism

for China, which the Conakry government said plans to invest at least \$7 billion in mines and infrastructure in Guinea, which has the world's largest bauxite reserves.

Crowley said would-be investors have a responsibility to take respect for human rights and good governance into account when contemplating business dealings with countries like Guinea.

He also said the State Department, which ordered the departure of non-essential U.S. embassy employees and dependents from Conakry early this month, has decided to bring them back to the United States. The embassy personnel and family members had initially been sent temporarily to Senegal, but Crowley said they are now being sent home because officials do not expect the situation in Conakry to be settled anytime soon.

This report was provided by VOA News (<http://www.voanews.com/>).

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦



The bodies of people killed during a rally are seen at the capital's main mosque in Conakry, Guinea (File)

Obama Praises Democratic Advances in Iraq

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — President Obama praised the democratic commitment of the Iraqi people and their government as he also called for timely passage of a new election law for January 2010 parliamentary elections.

Obama met with Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki October 20 at the White House.

"We had a wide-ranging discussion about the continuing progress that Iraq is making," Obama said after a nearly hourlong Oval Office meeting. "We have seen in the last several months a consolidation of a commitment to democratic politics inside of Iraq."

"We are very interested, both of us, in making sure that Iraq has an election law that is completed on time so that elections can take place on time in January," Obama added.

Iraq is scheduled to hold nationwide parliamentary elections January 16, 2010, but under an elections law that dates back to the regime of Saddam Hussein. Election officials warn that they need the new law in place as early as possible to allow time to set up polling places and other machinery necessary for a national election.

The parliament is working to create a new law, but is finding the way ahead difficult and has postponed a

vote on the law. Among other issues, the current law, used in the 2005 election, requires closed election lists.

The pending new law would require open lists, which name candidates



President Barack Obama and Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki shake hands after their meeting in the Oval Office at the White House in Washington, Tuesday, Oct. 20, 2009. (AP Photo/Alex Brandon)

and their political parties, instead of closed lists, which list only the names of political parties. Open lists would give voters greater choice in the candidates they choose to serve in parliament. This parliamentary election is seen as a step in Iraqi efforts to strengthen a democratic system launched after the fall of Saddam in 2003.

"A strong, free, prosperous Iraq is not only important for Iraqis but also is key to a strong and stable region," Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said October 20 at the opening of the U.S.-Iraq Business and Investment Conference in Washington.

Maliki combined his Washington visit with the Business and Investment Conference, which offers U.S. firms a chance to learn about trade and investment opportunities in Iraq. Iraq is set to hold a second

bidding round with global energy companies December 11–12 that ultimately could add millions of barrels of oil to Iraq's output. The first bidding round was held in June, and China National Petroleum Corporation and BP PLC were given deals in the Rumaila oil field, the first foreign companies to be allowed to invest in Iraq's oil sector since 1972.

Obama also said that the United States is on track to remove all of its combat forces from Iraq by

August 2010, leaving about 50,000 personnel in an advisory role. All U.S. forces are scheduled for withdrawal by the end of 2011 under an agreement Iraq reached with the Bush administration.

"We didn't just talk about military and security issues," Obama said. "What is wonderful about this trip is that it represents a transition beyond security and we are beginning to talk about economy, trade, commerce."

Maliki said the Washington conference is a major demonstration of the importance of economic devel-

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Obama Praises Democratic Advances in Iraq . . .

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opment in Iraq. The conference brings together more than 1,000 business entrepreneurs and an Iraqi delegation.

"I have also discussed with President Obama the various issues and the fact that our relations today have moved along and [are] not only confined to the security cooperation, but today have moved to the economic development and to providing prosperity for the Iraqi people," Maliki said through an interpreter.

Maliki asked for Obama's support in getting the U.N. Security Council to lift sanctions imposed on Iraq during Saddam's regime.

"We have put forth a lot of common sacrifices, and today ... there is a pluralistic political system in Iraq. This is important to move Iraq forward and to promote investment," Maliki said.

Maliki held private talks with Vice President Biden at an October 19 breakfast meeting. According to a White House statement, "In his meeting with Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki earlier (October 19), Vice President Biden noted that the October 20–21 U.S.-Iraq Business and Investment Conference is an important part of our efforts to promote cooperation under the U.S.-Iraq Strategic Framework Agreement. The vice president also encouraged the Iraqi Council of Repre-

sentatives to act expeditiously on an election law that will set the terms for transparent political participation in the upcoming Iraqi national elections."

A transcript of remarks by Obama and Maliki (<http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2009/October/20091020151506xjsnommis0.3308614.html>) is available on America.gov.

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦

Innovative U.S.-African Partnership Aims at Better Nutrition . . .

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In remarks at the September 25 CGI event, Secretary Clinton said, "Massive hunger poses a threat to the stability of governments, societies and borders. Since 2007, there have been riots over food in more than 60 countries."

So food security is "not simply a moral imperative," Clinton said. "It represents the convergence of complex issues that have a direct bearing on economic growth, energy and environmental factors, and our strategic interests. And, as such, it demands a comprehensive re-

sponse."

To that end, she explained, the Obama administration "has developed an unprecedented initiative aimed at advancing food security worldwide. The scope and scale of this initiative represents an elevation of development as a key element of our foreign policy. And our approach represents a rethinking of development policies and priorities."

She said, "If we can build partnerships with countries to help small farmers improve their agricultural output and make it easier to buy and sell their products at local or regional markets, we can set off a

domino effect.

"We can increase the world's food supply for both the short and the long term, diminish hunger, raise farmers' incomes, improve health, expand opportunity and strengthen regional economies."

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦

Clinton Optimistic About Russian Support on Iran, Missile Defense

On October 13, during a trip to Russia, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton gave an extensive interview with the ABC News program Nightline. The interview covered a whole range of international issues, as well as Clinton's working relationship with President Obama and her own political career. The following are excerpts in which Clinton talks about U.S. relations with Russia, cooperation on Iran, and anti-missile defense systems.

(begin transcript)

QUESTION: So you met yesterday with the Russian president.

SECRETARY CLINTON: Right.

QUESTION: Iran, I know, was on the agenda.

SECRETARY CLINTON: Right.

QUESTION: Can you update us about the Russian feeling about Iran at this point?

SECRETARY CLINTON: Well, I'm very pleased by how supportive the Russians have been in what has become a united international effort, both in the existing framework, something called the P5 + 1, which is Russia and China and, you know, Great Britain and France and Germany and us and the EU. We're all trying to figure out how to put this issue of Iran's nuclear weapons ambitions, you know, on the very top of the agenda, and I think we're succeeding. This goes back to the President's inauguration where he



Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton, left, and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov hold talks in Moscow.

said, you know, I'll reach out my hand if you unclench your fist.

We know that there are lots of problems between us and the Iranians. But we also know that we remain committed to preventing Iran from becoming a nuclear weapons power. So what have we done? In the meeting in Geneva on October 1st, three very important steps were taken: one, open up your previously undisclosed site at Qom to inspection; number two, ship out your low-enriched uranium for reprocessing outside of Iran — something Russia and the United States jointly presented, which I thought was quite significant; and begin to set a schedule for further meetings because we are pursuing this diplomatic track. Everybody hopes this succeeds. You know, sanctions, which there's a lot talk about, are a

result of the diplomatic track failing. So we are committed to the diplomatic track. But, you know, my view in life and in foreign policy is you hope for the best and you plan for the worst. And so I'm thrilled that we've got the kind of united front on the diplomatic track, but we're also going to continue to look at the potential sanctions if we're not successful.

QUESTION: The foreign secretary here seemed to dismiss, to some extent, the idea of sanctions. Was that the same position you've heard from the president?

SECRETARY CLINTON: Well, I think, to me, they're not mutually inconsistent. What the president — and he repeated it again to us yesterday — has said consistently is that, look, Russia does not prefer sanctions. You know, they have lots of doubts and concerns about sanctions. But sanctions may be inevitable. Whether they are or not is what we're trying to determine. So I don't see any inconsistency in that.

QUESTION: But do you feel — and I guess this is what the American people are interested in knowing — that if sanctions become necessary, the U.S. will have Russia's support?

SECRETARY CLINTON: I believe if sanctions become necessary, we will have support from Russia, because, for example, even Minister Lavrov has said that if Iran were to renege on the inspections or renege on the agreement we've reached about shipping out the low-enriched uranium called LEU, what else would you do? You'd have to sanction.

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So, I mean, we take this step by step. And I think the other thing to know about the Russians, for example — and it's true for some other countries as well — they believe diplomacy should always be in private, not in public, that you don't get what you need if you pressure people in public. You work it out behind the scenes. You know, our country is much more open. We conduct everything in public, it seems like. So we have a slightly different approach, that we think both public and private combined are the best way to go.

QUESTION: So let me ask you a question that you're probably going to tell me is in private, but I'm going to ask anyway. Secretary Gates said that and he share a very similar world view when it comes to negotiations, that if you made a concession, you want to make sure you get something back for it. Well, the Americans have just stood down or scrubbed the plan for a nuclear — for the defense system that was going to be in the Czech Republic and Poland, something that the Russians wanted. What did the U.S. get in exchange for that?

SECRETARY CLINTON: Well, I think that it's really important to understand what we did, because what we did was to conduct a very in-depth review which led us to con-

clude that the prior planning in the prior administration was not what was needed to meet the threat that we see.

Now, we, frankly, don't see the threat of a nuclear war between the United States and Russia. We just don't see that. We didn't see it happen during the Cold War when, you know, literally it was on a hair trigger. We don't see that.

What we do see is a country like Iran having short- and medium-range missiles that are able to target and reach our allies, our troops in Europe, the larger, you know, community, the Euro-Atlantic community. And therefore, why would we put in a system that was aimed at a threat that we don't really perceive and we don't think that Iran's long-term, long-range missiles are yet developed enough?

So what we did was to reconfigure our approach to meet the threat that we saw. And I think that, you know, we didn't — we weren't looking for any concessions, so we didn't do it for anybody else. We did it because we thought it was in our national security interest to do it.

QUESTION: No doubt it did engender some good will, though.

SECRETARY CLINTON: I think it was acknowledged as being more sensible, because, clearly, Cynthia,

what we're trying to do here is persuade the Russians — and I think we're making progress on this — to join with us in missile defense, to be part of the kind of global architecture of protecting against either regimes with nuclear-armed missiles, or, in the most horrible of outcomes, terrorists groups like al-Qaida with nuclear-armed missiles.

So we're going to everything we can to prevent that from happening, but I think it is highly sensible to also be focusing on defense. I supported missile defense and its development when I was a senator. That set me apart from some Democrats, because I really believe that we have the technological knowhow in our country to be able to create that kind of protective umbrella. But, you know, for me, this was doing what was smart.

(end transcript)

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U.S. Disappointed by U.N. Council's Vote on Goldstone Report

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — The United States is disappointed by the decision of the U.N. Human Rights Council to endorse a report on the January conflict between Israel and Hamas, saying the resolution approved in Geneva was unbalanced and goes beyond the serious allegations that came out of the U.N. inquiry, led by former South African judge Richard Goldstone.



The United States says the report by Richard Goldstone, above, raises serious allegations but a U.N. resolution on it was not balanced.

A few weeks do not present “a whole lot of time to set up mechanisms to try and investigate these allegations,” he said.

In addition, he said, it is “distressing ... that we’re losing focus on this ultimate goal, which is a lasting peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians,” which would help remove “the root causes” of the

State Department spokesman Ian Kelly said October 16 that the U.S. decision to vote against the resolution “in no way diminishes the deep concern that we have about the tragic events of last January” and the suffering they caused to Palestinians in Gaza and Israelis in southern Israel.

“We believe very firmly that Israeli and Palestinian children deserve the right to grow up without the threat of violence and without the kind of conflict that we saw last January,” he said.

However, U.S. officials believe the resolution had “an unbalanced focus,” and are concerned that “it will exacerbate polarization and divisiveness” at a time when the Obama administration is working to bring Israelis and Palestinians together for talks that would lead to a two-state solution.

“We believe that [the resolution] went beyond even the scope of the Goldstone report itself,” Kelly said,

and included “a discussion of elements that have to be resolved in the permanent status negotiations, between the Palestinians and the Israelis.”

The U.N. inquiry into the violence accused Israel of targeting Palestinian civilians and civilian infrastructure, and condemned Hamas for firing approximately 8,000 rockets and mortars at Israeli civilians for the eight years preceding the January conflict.

The United States is also concerned over the timing of the resolution, Kelly said. He said its passage was done “precipitously,” coming only one month after the September 15 release of the Goldstone report.

Instead of having the Human Rights Commission vote to endorse the report, “we think that a better approach would have been to give the parties adequate time to study the report and establish accountability measures through credible domestic processes,” Kelly said.

violence.

U.S. Special Envoy George Mitchell is now “very intensively involved in talking to both sides and getting them to agree to talk directly,” Kelly said. Mitchell met with Israeli representatives October 16 and plans to meet with a Palestinian delegation October 20. Following those meetings, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton will be submitting to President Obama an update on the efforts to restart peace negotiations. (See “Give Mideast Talks a Chance for Success, Obama Tells Leaders (<http://www.america.gov/st/peacesec-english/2009/September/20090922162958esnamfuak0.278454.html>).”)

In his explanation of the U.S. vote, Charge d’Affaires Douglas Griffiths told the Human Rights Council in Geneva October 16 that the United States regrets the council’s choice of “precipitous action rather than judicious deliberation regarding a

Ethiopian Sorghum Breeder Wins 2009 World Food Prize

By Steve Baragona
VOA News

The 2009 World Food Prize has been awarded to Gebisa Ejeta, an Ethiopian-born plant scientist at Purdue University. The private, \$250,000 award — presented at ceremonies in Des Moines, Iowa, October 15 — is given annually to people who have helped address the world's food needs. This year's prize honors Ejeta's life-long work to improve the production of sorghum, one of the world's most important grain crops. It also honors his efforts to take his discoveries beyond the lab — to the farmers who need them the most.

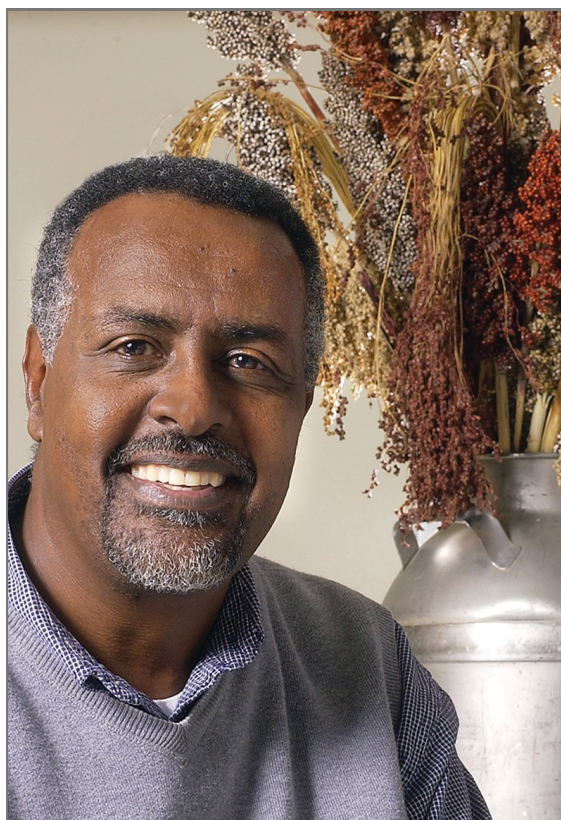
Desire to help others rooted in his own childhood poverty

Ejeta is one of those success stories that show the difference an education — and a motivated mother — can make. Ejeta grew up in a one-room thatched hut in rural Ethiopia. But he says his mother had other plans for him.

"She didn't care much for the lifestyle in the community that we lived in," Ejeta recalls. "And for some strange reason, this woman was able to see that through education one can get out of this drudgery and get to a better life."

So she found opportunities for Ejeta to study, and a place to stay, in a neighboring town, a 20-kilometer walk away. Ejeta studied. He excelled. And now he is being honored for his life's work helping others rise out of poverty.

Lowell Hardin is an emeritus professor at Purdue University who has



Dr. Gebisa Ejeta, an Ethiopian-born plant scientist at Purdue University

known Ejeta for 25 years. "Because he grew up in very, very modest circumstances — a single mother in a remote village in Ethiopia — he knew poverty," Hardin says. "He knew hunger. And when he was fortunate enough to get an education thanks to his mother's pushing, he decided he was going to apply his talents in this direction."

Research efforts focused on threats to African food crops

Ejeta applied his talents to fighting a weed called Striga, or witchweed, which threatens crops that feed more than 100 million people across sub-Saharan Africa. Ejeta says the parasitic weed can ruin fields of sorghum, a major staple in

hot, dry regions of Africa.

"If you grow a crop that is susceptible to infection by the parasite," he says, "you just basically don't have any chance for growing a crop if your soil is contaminated. And most of these soils are getting contaminated."

Before Ejeta took up the challenge, researchers hadn't had much success controlling the weed. Its seeds can lie dormant in the soil for decades. But Ejeta and his team at Purdue University discovered the chemical signals produced by the sorghum plant that tell the Striga seeds to wake up — that a victim is available. They then found sorghum varieties that didn't produce the signals, and bred a line of Striga-resistant plants that thrived in a broad range of African growing conditions. These new varieties produced up to four

times more grain than local types, even in drought-plagued areas.

Making sure African farmers benefit directly from his research

But Ejeta knew the research breakthrough was just the beginning. Once the new variety was developed in 1994, he worked with non-profit groups to distribute eight tons of seed to farmers in twelve African nations.

That's typical of Gebisa Ejeta, according to his colleague at Purdue, Mitch Tuinstra.

"One of the most important things about Gebisa's work is that he al-

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Gates Foundation Announces \$120 Million in Grants for Agriculture

By Kathryn McConnell
Staff Writer

Washington — A major U.S. foundation is giving \$120 million in grants to nine organizations to help small farmers in developing countries.

“Helping the poorest smallholder farmers grow more crops and get them to market is the world’s single most powerful lever to reduce hunger and poverty,” said Bill Gates, founder of the Microsoft Corporation and co-chairman of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

He spoke at an international symposium on food and agriculture in Des Moines, Iowa, October 15.

The Gates Foundation funding will support research for improved varieties of legumes, sorghum, millet and sweet potatoes.

The funding will also provide resources that African governments can draw on as they regulate biotechnology and develop methods that benefit small farmers, such as distributing information to them by cell phone and radio.

The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa said it will receive \$15 million in Gates Foundation funding to help farmers in Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali, Mozambique and Tanzania strengthen their policymaking capacity through training. The alliance will use part of its funding to bolster research institutes and establish databanks to support policy development.

Another destination of the Gates Foundation money is school feeding programs supplied with locally



The Gates Foundation's goal is to help 150 million of the poorest farming households in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia triple their incomes by 2025.

grown foods. Women farmers in flood-prone India also have been singled out for help in managing their water resources.

The new commitment from the foundation adds to the \$1.4 billion the Seattle-based charitable organization has previously committed to agricultural development.

Gates said that “many environmental voices have rightly highlighted excesses of the original Green Revolution,” like the overuse of fertilizers and irrigation.

Improved grains that were developed during the 1960s and 1970s saved millions from starvation in Asia.

Gates urged scientists, farmers and environmental groups to overcome their differences in the debate over productivity and sustainability.

“The fact is, we need both productivity and sustainability, and there is no reason we can’t have both,”

Gates said. “We have to develop crops that can grow in drought, that can survive a flood, that can resist pests and disease. We need high yields on the same land in harsher weather,” he said.

He said the way to increase productivity, especially on small farms, is to use more science-based research, adapted to local circumstances and sustainable for the economy.

Briefing reporters the following day in Washington, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said fighting hunger and increasing agriculture-led economic growth are a U.S. priority.

“We want to help small farmers worldwide produce more food,” she said. “Biotechnology has a critical role to play in increasing agricultural productivity, particularly in light of climate change,” and “it can help to improve the nutritional value of staple foods.”

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TOMS Shoes Donates One Pair of Shoes for Every Pair Purchased

By Louise Fenner
Staff Writer

Washington — With every purchase of a pair of TOMS shoes, TOMS gives a new pair of shoes to a child in need. Since its founding in 2006, the company — based in Santa Monica, California — has donated more than 150,000 pairs of shoes to children in Argentina, South Africa, Ethiopia and Haiti, and to young hurricane victims in the United States.

TOMS Shoes founder Blake Mycoskie developed the idea for the company when he was traveling in Argentina and saw children without shoes to protect their feet. He returned to Argentina a few months later with 10,000 pairs of shoes, distributed through a local non-government organization (NGO) called LIFE (Luchemos para una Infancia Feliz y con Esperanza). That was the beginning of the company's "one for one" model: sell a pair, give a pair away.

During TOMS "shoe drops" in each country, volunteers from the United States and local NGOs deliver shoes by hand, placing every single shoe on each child's foot. TOMS has also partnered with local health authorities to coordinate shoe drops in Argentina with a vaccination clinic, a nutritional census and, at times, disaster assistance. Following floods in the province of Salta, TOMS hired a cargo airplane and flew into the disaster area to donate 6,000 pairs of shoes and assist thousands of people whose homes were destroyed.

On its Web site, the company cites



TOMS Shoes founder Blake Mycoskie fits shoes on a child in Argentina. TOMS has donated more than 150,000 pairs of shoes to children.

the importance of shoes to health and well-being: shoes enable people to walk long distances to get food, water and medical help; prevent feet from getting cuts through which parasites can penetrate the skin; and enable children to attend school when shoes are a required part of their uniform, thus helping them build better lives.

"I thought I could create a more sustainable way to give shoes to people by being a for-profit business that was based on this 'buy one, give one' model" rather than by asking for charitable donations, Mycoskie said during a Clinton Global Initiative conference in early 2009. TOMS became profitable in 2008, and shoe sales in February 2009 were triple the sales level for

the same month a year earlier. "We've proven that it works," Mycoskie said. "You don't have to start a charity to help people. You can actually start a business and help far more people."

TOMS Shoes plans to give away 300,000 pairs of shoes to children in need in 2009 and to give away 1 million shoes by 2012.

TOMS Shoes is one of 11 finalists for the U.S. State Department's Award for Corporate Excellence, which recognizes American companies that demonstrate good corporate citizenship, including a commitment to promoting opportunity and prosperity in the overseas communities where they do business.

The nonprofit organization Friends of TOMS coordinates shoe drops and other activities.

For more information, see the Web sites for TOMS Shoes (<http://www.tomsshoes.com/>) and Friends of TOMS (<http://www.friendsoftoms.org/>).

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦

Obama Pushes For Tougher Financial Regulation

By Kent Klein
VOA News

President Obama is urging Congress to approve his plan to create a new government agency to protect Americans against financial abuses. The president wants to establish a Consumer Financial Protection Agency.

Obama says Americans need a single consumer agency to protect them against irresponsible lenders.

The president says many consumers took on too much debt and took out loans they could not afford, but blames some financial companies for taking advantage of their customers.

"My concern are the millions of Americans who behaved responsibly and yet still found themselves in jeopardy because of the predatory practices of some in the financial industry," he said. "These are folks who signed contracts they did not always understand, offered by lenders who did not always tell the truth."

At the White House on October 9, Obama said seven federal agencies each have a part in regulating the financial industry, which means lenders often escape accountability.



President Obama

He says that puts the entire U.S. economy at risk.

"As we have seen over the last year, abuses like these do not just jeopardize the financial well-being of individual Americans — they can threaten the stability of the entire economy. And yet, the patchwork system of regulations we have now has failed to prevent these abuses," said Obama.

The president says his proposed federal agency will make financial regulation simpler and more effective.

"The new Consumer Financial Protection Agency that I have asked Congress to create will have just one mission: to look out for the financial interests of ordinary Americans," he said. "It will be charged with setting clear rules of the road for consumers and banks, and it will be able to enforce these rules across the board."

Obama first asked Congress to create such an agency in June. The banking industry and some lawmakers have fought the proposal.

The president says banks and big financial firms are spending millions of dollars to make false claims about how a financial protection agency would work.

This report was provided by VOA News (<http://www.voanews.com/>).

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov/>) ♦

Gates Foundation Announces \$120 Million . . .

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At the same briefing on World Food Day, U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said the use of biotechnology is one strategy for more sustainable agriculture, but traditional sustainable farming practices also should be promoted.

The symposium was sponsored by the World Food Prize.

The transcript of a conference call hosted by Clinton and Vilsack (<http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2009/Octo->

[ber/20091019103806eaifas0.5082056.html](http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2009/Octo-ber/20091019103806eaifas0.5082056.html)) to discuss food security on World Food Day is available on [America.gov](http://www.america.gov).

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov/>) ♦

World Trade Body Membership Tops U.S. Trade Agenda for Russia

By Kathryn McConnell
Staff Writer

Washington — Seeing Russia join the World Trade Organization tops the U.S. trade agenda for Russia, says a senior U.S. official.

By early summer, hopes were high that a common understanding had been reached as to what Russia needed to do to become a member of the WTO. But everything changed on June 9, when Russia's prime minister, Vladimir Putin, announced that Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan would withdraw their individual applications to join the trade organization and make a joint bid for membership, said Betsy Hafner, director for Russia and Eurasia at the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative.

looks forward to working with Russia toward that goal.

Negotiators from Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus met informally with WTO representatives in Geneva on October 15 about their plans for pursuing membership,

other countries do not discriminate against Russia's exports.

The United States also wants Russia to fully implement a series of bilateral trade agreements signed in November 2006.



U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk, left, with Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Igor Shuvalov before their meeting in Washington.

Fully implemented, the 2006 agreements would lower tariffs and remove non-tariff trade barriers for a range of U.S. agricultural products and equipment, improve protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights in Russia, and create a more open regime for importing products with encryption technology such as cell

phones and computer operating systems.

The announcement "took nearly everyone by surprise," Hafner said, and will delay Russia's bid for membership.

Russia began to negotiate terms for entering the WTO in 1993. Belarus also began WTO negotiations in 1993, and Kazakhstan started negotiating with the rules-based trade body in 1996.

In September, hope was revived when Russian Deputy Prime Minister Igor Shuvalov met with U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk in Washington and confirmed Russia's aspirations to join the WTO, Hafner said. Kirk told Shuvalov that the United States continues to support Russia's individual accession and

most importantly announcing that they will pursue WTO accession as three independent states. But there are no specific plans for a meeting between U.S. and Russian WTO teams, Hafner added.

Hafner said the June 9 statement created a credibility gap, and Russia's negotiators will have to convince WTO members that they are serious about their country's accession. "The pace of Russia's accession is in Russia's hands."

WTO membership would help the diversification of Russia's economy by lowering tariffs on imports, including inputs for further processing in Russia, opening the market to foreign services, and ensuring that

But Russia has failed to pass all of the legislation necessary to implement these agreements, and in some cases has directly undermined them, Hafner said.

Also of concern to the United States are food safety measures Russia has recently issued that do not comply with internationally accepted standards to protect humans, animals and plants from disease, pests and contaminants, she added.

Russia recently refused to accept exports from about half of the U.S.

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Telling America's story

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facilities that had been approved to export pork to Russia. It has raised tariffs on a wide variety of agricultural and industrial products, from harvesting and construction equipment to butter and rice. These actions have significantly cut into U.S. exports to Russia, Hafner said.

Russia is the United States' 23rd largest goods trading partner, with \$36.1 billion in two-way goods trade in 2008. It is the largest export market for U.S. poultry and the fourth largest market for U.S. pork. In 2008, Russia imported a total of \$1.3 billion in U.S. agricultural products.

That amount could grow if Russia followed through with previous agreements to lower barriers, Hafner said.

In July, U.S. President Barack Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev met in Moscow and announced a bilateral presidential commission to deepen U.S.-Russian communication in a variety of areas, including business development and economic relations, agriculture, energy and environment. The commission formed more than 15 working groups, many of which are co-chaired by a U.S. Cabinet secretary and a Russian minister. The commission, however, does not cover negotiations on Russia's accession to the WTO.

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Ethiopian Sorghum Breeder Wins 2009 World Food Prize . . .

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ways carries it to the next level," Tuinstra says. "Which is, 'How do I translate the products of this research into technologies that empower and strengthen farmers in Africa?'"

Ejeta has always understood the importance of getting technology into the hands of African farmers. Just out of graduate school, Ejeta bred a high-yielding, drought-tolerant variety of sorghum. When the new hybrid variety was introduced in 1983, Ejeta says farmers were thrilled to find it yielded more than double what traditional varieties produced.

"They thought it was fantastic that they were getting this kind of performance with this hybrid," he

says. "And so, the initial response was, 'How can we get seed?'"

That is a critical question: Who will produce and deliver high-yielding seeds to farmers who need them, when there is no viable seed industry?

Ejeta was able to work with Sudanese farmers' cooperatives to scale up production of his drought-resistant sorghum.

But much of Africa still lacks a seed industry to get improved varieties to farmers. And farmers often don't have access to markets to sell the products of their improved harvests. So today, Ejeta is working to develop the market from the ground up. For example, along with local partners he connects brewers, bakers, and flour

millers with farmers growing the improved sorghum. By working along the entire chain, from farmers' seeds to consumers' plates, his work is helping to lift people out of poverty - and providing a powerful weapon in the war on hunger.

This report was provided by VOA News (<http://www.voanews.com/>).

See also "Ethiopian American Wins 2009 World Food Prize (<http://www.america.gov/st/development-english/2009/June/20090611155143akllennoccm0.1905634.html>)."

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